

## MOSES, EXODUS, AND THE LAW

In order to keep this lesson as concise as possible, you will be required to read many of the chapters included in order to get the overview. By reading, you will fill in the detail needed to appreciate the history that is being discussed. The comments below are to enhance the understanding of this portion of the Scriptures.

Whole chapters will be covered by referring only to the highlights. The Exodus of the Children of Israel, their extensive wanderings and their eventual organization into a nation at Sinai form a very interesting and absorbing study.

First the background:

Genesis 15:13,14 “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed (descendants) shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”

We begin here, because Abram was given a prophetic view of what was to happen to his descendants. Also, these verses contain the basis for the hope with which Moses was able to inspire the enslaved Israelites. If we refer to the time chart, Abram was called in 1921 B.C. The Exodus took place in 1491 B.C., 430 years later. This connection becomes proof of the fulfillment of the prophecy as given to Abram in v13 as found in Exodus 12:40,41. The prophecy in verse 14 was also literally fulfilled (see Exodus 3:22). The discrepancy of 400 to 430 years, is understood to be that 430 years from the time that Abram was called out of Ur, and 400 years is from the time that Isaac was born.

Genesis 50:20-26 Joseph's dying words while in Egypt emphasize his complete faith in Israel's deliverance according to what Yahweh had said to Abram in Gen 15. Joseph's insistence on an oath that they would carry his bones to the land of promise has important implications. It shows his knowledge of God's promise, as well as the prophecy concerning Israel's enslavement and later deliverance (see Hebrews 11:22). Joseph's remains were eventually transported and buried in the land of promise.

Exodus 1. Historical Period - 1716 B.C.

v.7 Cause oppression: Israel was extremely prolific, prosperous and powerful and this became a cause of concern to the Egyptian leader. The land of Goshen obviously would soon become too small to contain the growing Hebrew race.

vv.8-16 The prophetic 400 years were coming to an end. A new Pharaoh, from the old native Egyptian stock, rises to power. He afflicted Israel through forced labor. He also decreed that to prevent their increase decreed that all new-born males be put to death. (1573 B.C.)

Exodus 2 v.1 Moses is a direct descendant from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) of whom Levi was the fourth son.

vv.2-10 provides background to help us appreciate the significance of the Birth

of Moses, 1571 B.C. While many were thrown into the Nile river under the command of Pharaoh, Moses was miraculously saved. Not only was he saved, but he was ultimately raised by his own mother who would have instilled the promises of God and their promised deliverance. He would later become the promised deliverer. (But first, he had to learn his role)

vv.12-15 -Realization of his genealogy, he thought he could help deliver Israel by his own actions. Subsequently after his attempt to help, we read of the exile of Moses, 1531 B.C to the wilderness of Sinai. He was 40 years old when he fled Egypt, and 40 years that he remained an exile in the land of Sinai.

An interesting way to divide the life of Moses: He was 40 years old when he first left Egypt; he returned 40 years later and led God's people out of Egypt. He lived 40 years after the Exodus. He died 120 years of age.

Exodus 3 is a key chapter in the whole of the Bible. We will try to bring out key points. At this time, Moses dwells in Midian, in the vicinity of Sinai, the place where he would later bring the Children of Israel to receive the Law as confirmation that the LORD was truly calling him to this role. (V12)

- V1-6 While feeding his flocks near mount Horeb, Moses turns to note that this great site is a “burning bush” in which was an angel imbued with the Name of God. This is significant in that understanding “God manifestation” or God revealed, is critical to a correct understanding of the rest of the Bible. God is revealed in many forms... as a presence and voice in the Garden, as men (angels) to Abraham, and now by an angel in a burning bush to Moses. The angel declares the place “holy” as it placed Moses in the presence of the LORD.
- The message is clear: the angel, in the form of the burning bush speaks as God himself:
  - v6 - I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.
- The message he brings provides a charge to Moses, declaring that He (God) would v8 deliver the children of Israel from bondage, and v10 he wanted Moses to help by going to them to bring the message.
- V13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, **What is his name?** What shall I say unto them?

Moses asks God what his name is. Remember Moses was raised among the many gods of Egypt. The name that he would have always understood of the God of Israel, was “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” and more particularly as “the Almighty God” (cp Exodus 6: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.)
- V14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. This is the answer to the question: what is his name? God says of himself: I AM (first

- person) is the God's reference to Himself. Third person (when we refer to God's name) is HE IS or as in the Hebrew language: JEHOVAH or pronounced YAHWEH as indicated in the following verse: (either pronunciation is acceptable)
- 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The **LORD** God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: **this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations**. As with any name, it expresses the full character of the one who bears the name. I AM THAT I AM) is in this verse voiced as third person "**LORD God**". In the Hebrew read "Yahweh Elo(first person him)". Using a concordance we can be confident that the name means: He Who Will Be Mighty Ones. This is a declaration of God's purpose to be honored in all those who would take on his "godly" characteristics. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" was the original purpose of the creator and that purpose is indicated in His name.
  - V16 Again Moses is called to go to the children of Israel in Egypt with this new name of Yahweh Elohim (LORD God). Incidentally in the Old Testament everywhere capitals are recorded for LORD or GOD, it is translated from the Hebrew "Yahweh".

Exodus 4 The important point in Exodus 4 is the miraculous power that was invested in Moses as he was to bring God's message of deliverance to Israel which provided the authority for his mission, both to his own people and to Pharaoh. We also read of Moses meeting up with Aaron (verse 27). Also, the initial acceptance of Moses by the Children of Israel (verse 31).

Exodus 5 Moses and Aaron bring the command of the Lord to Pharaoh, "Let my people go." Pharaoh answers: I know not the LORD and increases the work load of the Hebrews.

Exodus 6:1-13 God reiterates His intention to deliver His people, again confirms his name, and encourages Moses by referring again to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Exodus 7 This describes God's judgment upon Egypt in the form of "plagues". Details of these plagues are given in chapters 7 through 12. Take a few minutes to read these chapters to capture the significance of these plagues. Note how they struck at the very root of Egyptian religious beliefs. For example, the river Nile was economically the life of their country-it was also their god. The frog was the chief deity of upper Egypt. The plagues demonstrated the superiority of Yahweh the God of the Hebrew slave people, over the many gods of their Egyptian taskmasters. Each plague successively weakened the morale of Pharaoh and his people, and gave added prestige and encouragement to the Israelites. The plagues were climaxed by the death of the first born of every living creature, man and beast in Egypt. Only the children of Israel in the land of Goshen escaped.

Exodus 12 This chapter details the actions needed in order to escape the Judgment of the LORD on the unbelievers in providing the details concerning the Passover. The Lamb selected for the sacrifice and the details surrounding this deliverance is a foreshadowing of the Pascal Lamb of the New Testament, Jesus Christ. We could emphasize its significance as a type of Christ's Sacrifice whose blood was poured out and became the means of entry into the family of God. This connection is supported in I Cor. 5:7,8.

Exodus 13 The Exodus from Egypt in 1491 B.C. fulfills Genesis 15:13,14.

v.19 - A point of interest. Moses fulfills Israel's obligation regarding Joseph's bones.

Exodus 14 v.4 Note God's declaration, "I will be honored." This is a fundamental principle in the relationship between God and man.

v.21 Here we consider the events in connection with the crossing of the Red Sea. This event was so dramatic that it became a historic landmark demonstrating God's power to save to the uttermost. (Psalm 78:13 - Acts 7:36)

#### **ORGANIZATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE UNDER THE LAW**

Exodus 16-18 These chapters describe the journey of the Children of Israel from the shores of the Red Sea to Sinai. They face many challenges to their faith and trust in the LORD, They often lose sight of their deliverer and in chapter 16 we read of the complaining of the people and God's continued patience with them. To answer one of their complaints, the LORD provides food in a strange new form which caused them to exclaim in wonder, "What is it?" The word "manna" is derived from this expression. In John 6v30-35, Jesus shows the significance of manna as the type of the "true bread," which God has provided for us in the person and words of His Son.

Exodus 17 This chapter highlights the episode in which the people murmur against Moses for lack of water. God commands Moses to smite the rock at Horeb. He strikes the rock as directed, and water comes forth to satisfy the needs of the people. In this chapter, Israel meets their first opposition on the journey to Canaan in a battle with Amalek,

Exodus 18 v.18-24 Jethro is Moses father in law and joins them in the wilderness. He notes the burden that placed upon Moses and provides wise counsel which induces Moses to undertake a workable re-organization of providing help to his people.

Exodus 19-31 We are provided in detail the "Laws" which were to govern Israel's political, social, economic and religious life throughout their history. Chapters 19 and 20 are especially interesting describing God's presentation of the Ten Commandments and the Law. Emphasis can be placed on 19v5,6

where the LORD chose them to be his people if they will obey.

Chapters 21-31 provide details and specifications for the tabernacle, its furnishings and the priestly functions. Again, when we look closely, this is a type of Jesus Christ, IE the means by which sinful men and women are given in order to be able to approach before the Holy God.

Exodus 32-33 A major failure of the nation who turned to Idolatry in the absence of Moses, is recorded with the intercession by Moses to God asking him to not destroy the whole nation. It also describes the punishment that followed. Of particular interest is God's declaration that he would not go with them, but would send his angel. Moses implores the LORD to continue with them so that the nations could not say that the LORD could not deliver his people. Moses also refused to go unless the LORD assured him he would continue. Moses' request for a guarantee by God to show him the LORD's glory.

Exodus 34 The confirmation that Moses requested is found here. V5-7 proclaims "the Glory of the LORD". We are introduced to the characteristics of the LORD as relates to the nation and to all who desire to honor Him. If we live with these same characteristics, we become the children of God. The tables of stone which Moses had broken on his return to the camp are replaced by another set which Moses received on a second ascent to the summit of Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 35-40 We find the information regarding the actual construction of the tabernacle, its contents and details regarding the priest's garments.

Leviticus: The Book of Leviticus is a record that focuses on the function of the Levites, the priests and the offerings connected with the tabernacle and correct rules of worship. It also describes various rituals, laws and ordinances.

Numbers: This Book called Numbers can be outlined briefly in that we are given several lists to help describe the organization of the Nation in their pilgrimage from Egypt to the Promised Land. The Israelites moved from the vicinity of Sinai and took up their journey to the borders of the Holy Land. The twelve spies searched out the land and their discouraging report caused the people to murmur. For this reason, the Israelites were prevented from entering the land. They are forced to wander for 40 years in the wilderness until that particular generation passed away.

Numbers 20 This chapter contains an important episode. A brief reference should be made to Israel's provocation of Moses and the disastrous consequences it brought about.

IE. v.12 Moses loses his opportunity to lead God's people into the Holy Land.

Numbers 21 We have the opportunity to mention here an event which has prophetic significance. Moses is caused to make a brazen serpent which he was to set up on a pole and the affected people who were bitten by snakes would look up to the pole and would be healed. It is helpful when we consider the sacrifice of Christ. We can turn to the reference found in John 3:14-15 to show the connection about Christ being lifted up on a pole for sinners to look upon and find deliverance.

Deuteronomy 34 This chapter brings us to the end of Israel's 40 years wandering in the wilderness. Moses views the land of promise from the top of Mt, Nebo. He dies here in the mountain. He had faith and was confident that his eyes would once again, under more favorable circumstances, behold the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This 34th chapter, in all probability, must have been written by Joshua as it is an account of Moses' death.

The children of Israel now stand on the banks of the Jordan with a new leader, Joshua (who is a type of Christ). He will lead them into the Holy Land. This we will review in the next section.